

Section Toolkit

Mentoring Program

Resources for Section Leaders

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Overview

Each Section Toolkit is intended to provide resources and ideas to help a Section become more effective in delivering value and benefit to its local membership. These toolkits share best practices and guidelines for effective Section operation and management of programs.

The Mentoring Program Toolkit was created to help Sections develop and execute a program focused on building mentoring relationships at the local level. Mentoring is valuable for both professional and personal development and can be a rewarding experience for both the mentor and mentee.

Use this toolkit to develop your Sections own mentoring program, establish the relationship for mentors and mentees and
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What is Mentoring?

To be involved in a mentoring relationship is a privilege for both participants, and as a result it is important to be gracious and thoughtful towards each other. When unclear about what to do or how to act, please seek guidance from the mentoring resources, or better yet, ask your mentor/mentee. The gesture of asking conveys respect for what the two of you are working to accomplish.

- The mentoring relationship has as its core purpose the professional development of the mentee through the counsel and guidance of the mentor.
- A successful mentoring relationship provides positive outcomes for both the mentee and mentor through the expansion of knowledge, skill, energy and creativity.
- The mentor provides career advancing skills to guide the mentee in positioning and presenting themselves in a manner which results in professional development.

Benefits of Mentoring

Mentee Benefits

- Enhanced business skills
- Confidence
- Improved communication skills
- New methods and strategies
- Heightened organizational performance
- Greater creativity and idea exposure
- Perspective
- Networking
- Advice

Mentor Benefits

- Satisfaction helping someone grow
- Develop talent
- Create a legacy
- Further develops leadership skills
- Opportunity to reflect on own practices
- Expand professional development network
- Gain fresh perspectives through interaction

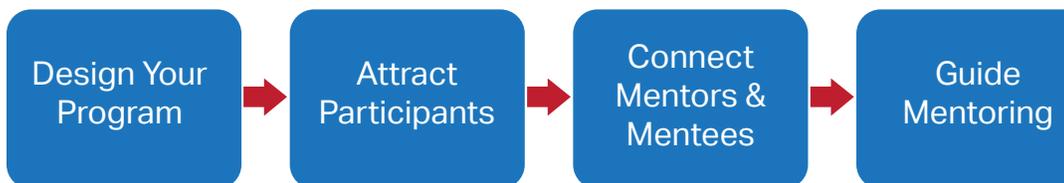
“Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others.”

—Jack Welch

Section Role in Mentoring

The local Section has a great opportunity to develop and deliver mentoring programs locally that benefit membership. Networking and connecting members is an invaluable resource to your membership. By developing a local mentoring program, the Section is not only supporting member development, but also providing an outlet for networking.

A thriving, impactful mentoring program is within your reach. But great mentoring programs don't just happen. They are built through thoughtful planning and sustained commitment to guiding participants through the mentoring process while continually improving the program. Utilize this toolkit to help create a high-impact mentoring program for your Section.



Design Your Program

The starting point for any mentoring program begins with two important questions:

- Why are you starting this program?
- What does success look like for participants and the organization?

To answer these questions you will need to dive deep to understand your target audience. Make sure you understand who they are, where they are, their development needs, and their key motivations to participate. Translate your vision into SMART objectives: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound. Objectives provide direction to program participants, establish program key performance indicators (KPIs), and help organizational leaders understand why they should offer their support.

Successful mentoring programs offer both structure and flexibility. Structure provides participants a mentoring workflow to follow and is critical to help participants achieve productive learning that reaches defined goals. Similarly, flexibility is essential to support varying individual mentoring needs across specific learning goals, preferences, and learning style.



Attract Participants



The best designed mentoring programs won't get far without effective program promotion, mentor recruitment, and training.

When new mentoring programs are introduced in organizations, there is generally natural enthusiasm. Yet this enthusiasm doesn't always translate into high participation rates. A common reason is the absence of effective promotion. Don't assume potential mentors and mentees understand the benefits. For many, this will be their first opportunity to participate in mentoring. You will need to convince them that participating is worth their time and effort. Beyond participants, key leaders and stakeholders will need to be educated on the benefits of the program and strategic value to the organization.

Consider the needs of mentors. Building a solid base of mentors can be a challenge. It is important to understand the positive and negative factors that impact mentor participation. Once you have identified them, look for creative ways to reinforce positive drivers and lower the hurdles of negative ones throughout the mentoring process. For example, mentors are often busy people with limited time to spend. How can you help mentors be more efficient with the time they have to dedicate to mentoring? Also consider recognition and reward strategies. Formally recognizing mentor involvement can be very motivating and help attract additional mentors to the program.

Lastly, productive mentoring doesn't just happen. Provide tips and best practices listed in this toolkit throughout the mentoring program to help participants stay on track and get the most out of the program.

Connect Mentors and Mentees



A productive mentoring relationship depends on a good match.

Matching is often one of the most challenging aspects of a program. Participants will bring various competencies, backgrounds, learning styles and needs. A great match for one person may be a bad match for another.

Matching starts by deciding which type of matching you'll offer in your program: self-matching or admin-matching. Consider giving mentees a say in the matching process by allowing them to select a particular mentor or submit their top three choices. Self-matching is administrative light, which in larger programs can be a huge plus.

For more structured programs, you may want to get the program started by bulk, or admin-matching. Evaluate various match combinations before finalizing as ensuring quality mentors for hard-to-match mentees can be challenging.

Matching best practices start with a solid profile for all participants (mentors and mentees). Critical profile elements include development goals, specific topical interests, location, experiences, and matching preferences. Think about how you'll want to match people, or if you'll want them to save time by having them match themselves. For example, you may want to match incoming Section officers with experienced leaders. For self-matching, perhaps participants might like to connect with someone from the same previous employer, or the same college. The more you know about your participants, the better chance your participants will have for a great fit and a happy, productive mentoring outcome.

Guide Mentoring

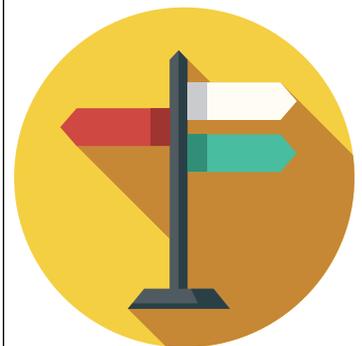
Now that your participants are enrolled, trained, and matched, the real action begins.

It is also where mentoring can get stuck. Left to themselves, some mentorships will take off and thrive, others may not. Why? Because mentoring is not typically part of one's daily routine. Without direction and a plan, the mentoring relationship is vulnerable to losing focus and momentum. That is why providing some structure and guidance throughout the mentorship is vital to a successful mentoring program.

One best practice is to ensure all mentorships have goals and development plans (see meeting 2 and meeting 3 assignments). This serves two purposes. First, it brings focus at the onset, which helps a mentorship get off to a good start. Second, it adds accountability to accomplish something.

Provide all mentoring relationships with timely and relevant "help resources" (topical content, mentoring best practices, etc.) throughout the mentorship. Chunk-sized content delivered at key points is ideal.

As a mentoring connection progresses, establish checkpoints where mentorships report on their progress. Even if your organization doesn't choose to formally track the details, just the act of reporting progress helps mentors and mentees stay productive.



Lastly, have a formal process that brings closure to the mentoring experience. Within this process, provide an opportunity for both the mentor and mentee to reflect upon what was learned, discuss next steps for the mentee, and provide feedback on the benefits of the program and process.

Attributes of Effective Mentor Relationships

Collaboration—Both the mentor and mentee play a partnership role in the mentee’s development.

Respect—Mutual appreciation is core—both of the mentor’s knowledge and of the mentor’s investment of time and energy.

Responsiveness—As in any respectful collaboration, both parties need to be sensitive and responsive to the goals, needs and perspectives of the other.

Confidentiality—This supports the ability to be vulnerable, yet safe, in difficult conversations.

Joint Accountability—When you and your mentor keep agreements, this strengthens trust and helps keep the learning relationship focused and productive.

Free and Honest Expression—You and your mentor can share strengths and weaknesses; goals and aspirations; and past, present and anticipated experiences. Both of you can offer and hear feedback in the spirit of building on competencies and strengthening areas of weakness.

Mentoring Role

What is expected of a mentor? As a mentor, you will be asked to provide guidance to your mentee based on his/her learning needs and development areas.

You can accomplish this in several ways and through various roles; yet no matter what role you play, remember that you are either the expert in the relationship or responsible for helping the mentee find access to the appropriate expert.

The role of mentor includes the following:

- Act as a role model
- Challenge the mentee
- Hold mentee accountable
- Help identify skill gaps
- Provide honest feedback
- Share expertise

What a Mentor Does:

- Takes a long-range view of the mentee's growth and development.
- Helps the mentee see the destination but does not give him/her detailed map to get there.
- Offers encouragement and cheerleading, but not "how to" advice.

A Mentor Does Not:

- Function as an advocate for the mentee in the organizational environment such as the boss would; the relationship is more informal.
- Tell the mentee how to do things.
- Support the mentee on transactional, short-term problems.
- Serve as a counselor or therapist.

Mentee Role

Open and sincere communication. Tell your mentor how you prefer to get feedback (for example, direct, with humor, softened). Don't get defensive. Thank your mentor for taking the risk to be honest with you. Remember, if your mentor was not invested in you, he/she would probably not take this risk. Honest feedback gives you an opportunity to improve yourself and help you to move towards fulfilling your potential.

Effective utilization of mentor time and counsel. Always be considerate and respect your mentor's time as you do your own. Be thorough, but succinct in your explanations, experiences and comments. Watch for clues that you may be going on too long. It is polite to ask directly if you are talking too long.

Establish mutually clear development and career goals. Prepare the goals and objectives you have for your career. Be prepared to ask for

specific guidance and advice on your goals, plans and strategic ideas. The more specific you can be, the easier it will be for your mentor to help you.

Utilize active listening skills. Use active listening skills during discussions with your mentor. Be careful not to interrupt, unless you need to clarify a point and you see no other opportunity or pause. Take notes when appropriate, ask good questions and have a purpose for your questions.

Be sensitive to the needs of the mentor. Allow your mentor to take the lead in the relationship, at least initially. Listen and respect the opportunities, limitations and format of the relationship he or she is able to provide for you. Always act with courtesy and respect towards your mentor.

Respect the mentor's time. Always be considerate and respect your mentor's time as you do your own. Be thorough, but succinct in your explanations, experiences and comments. Watch for clues that you may be going on too long. It is polite to ask directly if you are talking too long.

Learner – As a mentee, you need to absorb the mentor's knowledge and have the ambition and desire to know what to do with this knowledge. It is also important to practice and demonstrate what has been learned.

Observe as well as listen, model behavior.

Initiator of requests for help or guidance. A mentee is the "gauge" to measure how interactive the connection between the mentor and mentee will be. This means that the mentee determines the capacity of the mentoring connection. The mentee decides upon the amount of help and guidance he/she needs. As well, the mentee should take the initiative to ask for help or advice and to tackle more challenging assignments.

Declaration of need for nurture or autonomy. Prepare yourself to move beyond your mentoring connection, once it has served its purpose. Be sure to end on a positive note. Keep the door open to return to your mentor for assistance or advice at a future time. Follow up with your mentor after termination to keep in touch, to share your progress and to continue to express your gratitude.

Tips for the Mentee

Be proactive and seek feedback from your mentors. Corrective feedback and advice can be a bitter pill to swallow, but it can also be very helpful. Your willingness to ask for and listen to feedback from your mentor can provide important opportunities for growth.

Openly discuss the topic of feedback early in your mentoring partnership. Encourage your mentor to give you feedback. Say that you value his/her perspective and want to hear an honest assessment of your performance. Mention the form in which you prefer to receive feedback. If you value directness and honesty, tell him/her that you would like to hear direct, frank, straightforward feedback. Or you might ask your mentor to be honest with criticism but also sensitive to your feelings. Say that you also want to hear what you're doing well.

Receive feedback non-defensively. Keep a neutral demeanor, and don't take the comments personally. Try to triangulate the discussion; that is, join with your mentor to look at the issue. Focus on your behavior or your performance, not on you as a person.

Be specific when asking for feedback. Instead of asking, "How am I doing?" ask specific questions: "Did that question I asked make sense?" or "Where can I learn more about this topic?" This approach will encourage your mentor to be more specific and helpful in his/her feedback.

Demonstrate an eagerness to learn. Demonstrate that you have followed advice or commitments for action at every opportunity, even if you have modified your plan. Pointing out that you used your mentor's help and sharing outcomes is important.

Ask for suggestions on how you could improve. Invite your mentor to suggest specific changes in what you say or do. You could even ask him/her to model or demonstrate the target behavior.

Seriously consider all advice and suggestions. Accept advice and suggestions with an open mind, and be willing to try new things. Arguing why the mentor's advice would not work, can be construed as rude and close-minded. Try new ideas as soon as you can, and share the results with your mentor. Knowing how things are going will make him/her better able to provide continued help. If you never follow through on suggestions, or if you forget to share the results of trying them, your mentor is likely to get frustrated, feel that he's/she's wasting time, and move on to a more receptive mentee.

Tips to Consider when Looking for a Mentor

- Be clear on why you want a mentor. Are you looking for someone to offer specific advice? Do you want a conduit to your industry's movers and shakers? Or do you just need a sounding board?
- Define your personality and communication style. What kind of mentor would best complement you? You may choose someone who's your opposite (an extrovert to your introvert, for example), or someone in whom you see yourself (and vice versa).
- When asking someone to be your mentor, explain why you're asking and what you'd expect out of the relationship (see the first bullet above). Name your reasons for approaching this particular person.
- A mentor is a powerful role model. Look for someone who has the kind of life and work you'd like to have. Also, choose a mentor you truly respect. Don't just go for the biggest name you can find.
- Before asking someone to be your mentor, consider first simply asking for input on a single specific topic. How did that go? Was it good advice? Was it delivered in a way that made sense to you and filled you with confidence and energy?
- Show gratitude. Never let your mentor feel taken for granted! Also, supply feedback. If your mentor suggested something that really worked out for you, report back. People love hearing about their part in a success story.
- When looking for a mentor, think beyond former bosses and professors. Look to older family members or friends, neighbors, spiritual leaders, community leaders, the networks of your friends and colleagues, or officials of professional or trade associations you belong to. Avoid asking your direct supervisor at work. You want to be free to discuss workplace issues as well as your plans for future advancement.
- Keep in mind that mentoring can take many forms. It can be a monthly lunch, a quarterly phone call, a weekly handball game, or merely a steady E-mail correspondence. Your mentor does not even have to live in your city or region.

- Don't become too dependent on your mentor. The idea is that one day you will eventually be able to fly on your own. In fact, you may not take every bit of advice your mentor offers. Continue to think for yourself.
- Finally, if you ask someone to be your mentor and that person refuses, don't be hurt or offended. This is not personal! Potential good mentors are very busy people. Thank him or her for the consideration and potentially ask for a referral.

Mentee Requirements

- Schedule face-to-face or virtual meetings as agreed
- Informally communicate between meetings
- Attend meetings
- Identify strengths/weaknesses
- Identify professional development goals
- Complete a strategy document
- Track progress
- Maintain confidences
- Demonstrate application of learning through the program

Mentor Program – Meeting Guide

Sometimes mentors come on too strong, sometimes not strong enough. So much depends on the dynamic between the mentor and the mentee. So what's a mentor to do?

Building trusting relationships is essential groundwork for mentoring.

Note: Some of the information may be already known if there is an existing relationship between the mentor and mentee.

This meeting guide will take the mentor through the first three meetings with his/her new mentee, in a structured format.

Meeting 1: Getting Acquainted

Initial Meeting Discussion Guide: Mentor should both ask these questions of the mentee as well as provide this information to facilitate a mutual exchange to begin to build trust.

1. Tell me about your career to date
2. What are your current work priorities?
3. What work do you want to be doing in the future?
4. What is your educational background?
5. What professional/industry associations do you belong to?
6. How do you like to spend your spare time?
7. What are your hobbies?
8. How do you most like to learn, i.e. formal or through experiences?
9. What are you proud of achieving so far in your career?
10. What do you expect from me as a mentor?

Assignment for next Meeting: Have mentee draft a summary of how they expect to maximize this mentoring opportunity to benefit their performance development. This should be sent to the mentor prior to next meeting.

Meeting 2: Defining Developmental Needs Part 1

Meeting Discussion Guide: Mentor begins the session by providing feedback to mentee on the summary for maximizing the mentoring opportunity. Confirm benefits that are likely and identify those that are not realistic with an explanation as to why not.

1. What would you say are your strengths and weaknesses?
2. What aspects of you and your work have you received compliments on?
3. What aspects of you and your work would others say are your weaknesses?
4. What skills, knowledge and attitudes are required by your current work?
5. Learning which skill, knowledge or attitude would make the biggest difference to your work life performance and engagement?
6. If there was one thing you'd like to change about your work life to date, what would it be?
7. How will you know when you have mastered the skills, knowledge or attitudes you want to learn? What will you be thinking, feeling, doing and saying? What will others around you be thinking, feeling, doing and saying?

8. What and whom will be impacted by you mastering the skill, knowledge or attitude you want to develop? Can you describe this impact in terms of specific measurable and observable outcomes? Can the outcome be quantified? Will there be any measures of the quality of the outcome? What resources (people, information, things) will have been used?
9. Is there anyone you admire who already has these skills, knowledge or attitudes? What is it about that person that you'd like to learn?

Assignment for next meeting: Have mentee to draft a summary of the areas that they feel most in need of development and how they will know when they have successfully developed these areas. Summary should include formal responses to questions # 5, 7, and 8. This should be sent to the mentor prior to next meeting.

Meeting 3: Defining Developmental Needs Part 2

Meeting Discussion Guide: Mentor references the summary of the mentee's developmental goals in this session.

1. Looking at your developmental goals, what areas do you think I could be of most help to you?
2. What skills, knowledge and attitudes will be most important to you achieving your developmental goals?
3. What if any recurrence of these themes do you see in your work?
4. In what situations will you be using the skill/knowledge/attitude the most? In what aspects of these situations do you want to receive mentoring from me?
5. What sort of people will you be using this skill/knowledge/attitude with? Are there issues about these people that you want to discuss?
6. Who else could you ask for assistance in these areas?
7. What information will you need to put this skill/knowledge/attitude into practice? Are there any particular areas of information that you want to discuss?
8. What courses, books or articles have you read on the topic?
9. Which skill, knowledge or attitude do you want to learn first?
10. What do you see as being the key issues involved in this topic?
11. What do other people think about this issue?

Assignment for next meeting: Have mentee draft a development plan outlining areas for improvement/strengthening; research resources for filling skill gaps.

Mentor Meeting—Action Item and Check List

Use this form to capture your meeting details for follow up and accountability. This form should be completed by the Mentor and shared with the Mentee to complete and follow up on action items as appropriate.

Mentor: _____ Mentee: _____

Meeting Date: _____

Notes:

Action Items	Delivery Date

Did you remember to:

Establish Next Meeting – When:

Define Action Items and Delivery Dates